

Server Guidelines

The late Pope John Paul II has said, "Your commitment to the altar is not only a duty but a great honor, a true holy service."

General Guidelines

1. Age – 5th graders and up.
2. Come at least 10 minutes before mass and help prepare things. (See below) Be aware that if you show up 10 min or less and expect to serve, someone may have already taken your place.
3. Dress in appropriate attire: nice shirt, shoes, pants or dress. No flip flops. Make sure to wear solid colors so that images don't show through the alb.
4. Review what you have to do before mass, even before you come. If you have any questions, be sure to ask.
5. Find an alb which goes to about ankle length and remember the size. If the alb is too long you may trip or too short, it looks bad.
6. Take care of albs, putting them on the right numbered hanger, and button the top button. If one needs to be cleaned, let someone know.
7. Help with preparation before and take down/clean up after mass.
8. Know where the following are in the sacristy:
 - Albs, crosses, and rope(cincture)
 - Bread(small and large hosts), wine, and water (Ciborium and cruets/pitcher)
 - Corporals, towels, and purificators (Bowl)
 - Microphones and batteries
9. In order to light candles, it is best to use a lighter (including the one with a wick) It may be necessary to for taller candles to use the lighter and bend the wick to light the candle, eg for the Easter candle.
10. If the wick candle lighter is used, make sure the pull in to put out flame but then push out so that the wax doesn't stick to the sides of the lighter.
11. In order to light the charcoal, it is best to use the candle lighter with the wick. Take tongs and hold charcoal so grooves are pointed down and then light. The charcoal will spit but try to light all the grooves, and then turn over and put with grooves facing up in censor. Make sure there is incense in the boat(incense dish)
12. When walking with cross/candles and in general, walk like you normally would.
13. Genuflect at start and end of mass, unless you are carrying something. Profound bow to altar whenever you pass in front of it or after placing something on it. (Head bow to priest after you give him something.)
14. Show reverence at all times.
15. If you are not carrying anything, fold your hands. (This applies anytime.)
16. When sitting, do not cross your legs. Be sure to be quiet and only talk if absolutely necessary.
17. Anticipate the need by knowing the Mass and know what you have to do next at all times. If you don't know, look at sheet in pew first and then ask if you still don't understand.
18. Participation is important as you are modeling for others
19. A good job is when people barely notice you.
20. In putting out candles, starve the oxygen to the flame rather than crushing the flame.
21. **Leaders** - Are to answer any questions which come up. They are also to correct and help if they see things which are concerning or if asked by Father. They basically keep things going smoothly. Scheduling will be done by another person.
22. **Scheduling** - At the beginning of each scheduling cycle, schedules will be available in the back of each church. If you know you are going to be away for certain dates, let the scheduler know. If you can't make a scheduled time it is up to you to find a replacement.
23. **Training** – Training is required. If someone can't make the training sessions, they are to let the appropriate person know. Once trained review the guidelines and directions each year. These are available on the website.

Guidelines for Altar Server

The following guidelines were prepared by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy and presented to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for discussion at the June 1994 Special Assembly on Thursday, June 16, 1994. The suggested guidelines have been slightly revised according to the third typical edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. They may be used as a basis for developing diocesan guidelines.

1. Although institution into the ministry of acolyte is reserved to lay men, the diocesan bishop may permit the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte to be carried out by altar servers, men and women, boys and girls. Such persons may carry out all the functions listed in no. 100 (with the exception of the distribution of Holy Communion) and nos. 187 - 190 and no. 193 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

The determination that women and girls may function as servers in the liturgy should be made by the bishop on the diocesan level so that there might be a uniform diocesan policy.

2. No distinction should be made between the functions carried out in the sanctuary by men and boys and those carried out by women and girls. The term "altar boys" should be replaced by "servers". The term "server" should be used for those who carry out the functions of the instituted acolyte.
3. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received Holy Communion for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
4. Servers should receive proper formation before they begin to function. The formation should include instruction on the Mass and its parts and their meaning, the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Servers should also receive appropriate guidance on maintaining proper decorum and attire when serving Mass and other functions.
5. Since the role of server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the priest. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions normally entrusted to these ministers.
6. Acolytes, altar servers, readers, and other lay ministers may wear the alb or other suitable vesture or other appropriate or dignified clothing. (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no.339) All servers should wear the same liturgical vesture.
7. Servers carry the cross, the processional candles, hold the book for the priest celebrant when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread, wine, and water to the priest during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the priest, assist the priest celebrant and deacon as necessary.
8. Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the priest along with the congregation. They also join in singing the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.
9. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the priest celebrant and deacon. The place next to the priest is normally reserved for the deacon.
10. Servers may not distribute Holy Communion unless they have been mandated for this function by the bishop.

The *Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, and Ushers* (Book of Blessings, nos. 1847-1870) may be used before servers first begin to function in this ministry.

Details from GIRM(General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

100. In the absence of an instituted acolyte, lay ministers may be deputed to serve at the altar and assist the priest and the deacon; they may carry the cross, the candles, the thurible, the bread, the wine, and the water, and they may also be deputed to distribute Holy Communion as extraordinary ministers.[\[85\]](#)

(So some of the things below are only for a duly instituted acolyte and not a lay person who has been delegated.)

116. If a deacon is present at any celebration of Mass, he should exercise his office. Furthermore, it is desirable that, as a rule, an acolyte, a lector, and a cantor should be there to assist the priest celebrant. In fact, the rite to be described below foresees a greater number of ministers.

139. When the Prayer of the Faithful is completed, all sit, and the Offertory chant begins (cf. no. 74).

An acolyte or other lay minister arranges the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal upon the altar.

140..... The offerings of the faithful are received by the priest, assisted by the acolyte or other minister. The bread and wine for the Eucharist are carried to the celebrant, who places them upon the altar, while other gifts are put in another appropriate place (cf. no. 73).

C. The Duties of the Acolyte

187. The duties that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may coincide. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed among several acolytes. If, however, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

The Introductory Rites

188. In the procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two ministers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it in a worthy place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

189. Through the entire celebration, the acolyte is to approach the priest or the deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus it is appropriate, insofar as possible, that the acolyte occupy a place from which he can conveniently carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

190. If no deacon is present, after the Prayer of the Faithful is concluded and while the priest remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. Then, if necessary, the acolyte assists the priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the priest. If incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him while he incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the acolyte incenses the priest and the people.

193. After the celebration of Mass, the acolyte and other ministers return in procession to the sacristy, together with the deacon and the priest in the same way and order in which they entered.